

is at an end! He produced his effects where effects are lasting—on men's minds—the theatre where the drama of evolution is a reality.

He did not accomplish *all* the change in sentiment of which we now reap the result, but was the pioneer who voiced it, when it was unpopular. There were few, twenty years ago, to express sympathy for the criminal, few to say that crime is the result of ignorance, few to preach an unvarying substitution of love in exchange for hate.

Dr. Field seems wholly blind to the fact that Ingersoll was anything more than "a brilliant and defiant agnostic." He fails utterly to see in him a strong, self-reliant soul, whose mission was to clear away the relics of a most material theology, and thus open the way for a later influx of spiritual thought. This Ingersoll could not have done, had he been at all a different man to what he was. As it was, with all his iconoclasm, he preached a doctrine of love that put to blush the vindictiveness of theology.

What have unbelievers done for humanity?

The list of "unbelievers" is a long one if it is to include, as it reasonably must, all who have protested against dogma. It must include many a martyr who has given his life for truth—many a scientist who, as he gained a broader conception of God, was forced to "cease from his god of tradition." It must include all who appreciate the value of an honest doubt as compared with a blind illogical faith—all whose inspired works have strengthened the protests of the few against the wicked intolerance of the many—all who have helped humanity to realize that Truth alone can make them free—all who take arms against injustice, and declare that every man is here as "divinely" as every other.

"In all the realms of art, poetry and science," says Elbert Hubbard, "no man who stood in the front rank has ever been an orthodox Protestant. At the grave of Oliver Wendell Holmes, Edward Everett Hale stated that the six great poets of America were Unitarian in faith. Challenged for the statement, he afterward reiterated it, and said that no great poet, artist, inventor, writer or scientist had ever lived, who believed in the five points of Calvinism."

Ingersoll's influence is not at an end. There will be no Agnostic party formed—no fanatical body of persons banded together calling themselves his "followers," for the Christian world, permeated, by every phase of liberal thought, as it is to-day, has no need of this. But as the world grows interiorly bigger, as the people come more and more into possession of their birthright—Truth—there will be a larger appreciation of his work, a fuller recognition of the soul who came among us to serve the cause of intellectual and religious freedom.

Bicycles and Churches.

BY M. C. O'BRYNE, LA SALLE, ILL.

THE population of Chicago is estimated at two millions. Of course this includes the residents of a dozen or more suburban villages which relatively are to Chicago proper in about the same position as are Kingston, Uxbridge, Watford, Barnet and Waltham to the capital of England. In its haste to eclipse New York as the biggest thing in America, Chicago has "buncomed and buncoed" all the prairie farmers within a radius of twenty miles or so into local citizenship, thus rendering it possible for the civic corn-gambler at the Board of Trade building

to corner and bull and bear concurrently with the planting hoeing, and husking of his brother townsman far out on the wind-swept veldt of the suburbs. Of these two millions of people 861,152 are said to be duly labelled as members of definite religious denominations, 600,000 being fortunate enough to belong to the Roman Catholic communion, whereby they are warranted against algo-phrenomany, a malady arising from doubts on the subject of the true church and what one must do to be saved.

At the apex or capstone of the obelisk which represents Chicago's denominational differentiations we find the word "miscellaneous." Among the too-small-to-be-classified congregations included in this category is one known as All Souls', a designation reminiscent of Hallowe'en and suggestive of purgatorial masses. This is an "independent" church, which means that both pastor and congregation are bound by no creeds or confessions, tied to no catechisms, whether longer or shorter, ready and willing to extend the hand of fellowship to any man, without inquiring too closely if he calls his fetish Jehovah, Jove, or Lord. Living on the ghost of old religion, it would seem difficult for any man long to occupy the position of minister or pastor to so heteroclitic an association, unless as an ethical teacher his qualifications be so high that he can afford to dispense with psalm-singing and the mummery of "divine worship" altogether. Generally speaking, the independent pastor is a franc tireur or bashi bazuok, free to criticize and, if need be, to condemn the methods and teachings of more orthodox ministers from the standpoint of a brother laborer, and therefore without disturbing the elements as they are agitated when the "infidel" speaks. For, be it noted, your independent pastor is still an esoteric, an epopt, an initiate, not to be lightly regarded as a layman. Though more or less nondescript, he is

"One whom the mob, when next we find or make
A Popish plot, shall for a Jesuit take,
And the wise Justice, starting from his chair,
Cry: 'By your priesthood, tell me what you are!'"

I fear this is rather a lengthy introduction to the subject proper of this paper, which is a discovery made and publicly announced (in a recent sermon) by the minister of the aforesaid independent church. According to this gentleman, "Religion in our day seems to be dying out. The bicycle is a successful competitor with the church, while women's clubs were a greater attraction than the house of God." Surely, if this be true, the bicycle has suppeditated and become a potent factor in a mighty revolution whose end no man may venture to foretell. The memory of man and the records of his life story do not extend back to an era wherein we do not find him strapped Ixion-like to the cruel wheel of religion, continuously alternating between the zenith and the nadir of mind-perverting terrors and hopes as baseless as the quicksand. And now, if we may presume to mix our metaphors a little, the serpent-wheel itself is something "*quem arca obliquam rota transit*"—an evil thing which a brazen wheel has passed over sideways, and while passing has very much disfigured. We know and can appreciate the five causes advanced by the great historian for the triumph of Christianity over Paganism; our reason assures us that they are efficient and commensurate; but to what undignified straits, what distressful *lesa dignitatis* will the coming historian of the decline and fall of Christendom be reduced who can sum it all up in one word—Bicycle! Instead of a grand mausoleum, carrying entablatures covered